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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 003250

SIPDIS

NSC FOR GREEN/DORMANDY
LONDON FOR POL-BELL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MASS](#) [KDEM](#) [IN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SHOOTS DOWN ARMS FOR NEPAL

REF: A. NEW DELHI 3164

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 3086

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt. Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (U) Reaffirming India's position that the GOI wants to see meaningful steps toward restoration of democracy before resuming military assistance to Nepal (Ref B), Foreign Minister Natwar Singh told the upper house of Parliament on April 28 that following the arrest the day before of former PM Deuba, military aid "will remain under review." Describing King Gyanendra's April 23 "assurances" to him and PM Manmohan Singh publicly for the first time, the Foreign Minister reported that the monarch had promised that he would "unwind" the state of emergency and press restrictions (including the ban on Indian TV channels) and release the remaining political prisoners, and alluded to but did not spell out that the King expected Indian arms supplies to resume as a result. Additionally, Natwar stated, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister had stressed for the King the need to "restart the political process, meet all the political party leaders, and from there ensure that elections are held and Parliament is recalled and the Government is formed."

[1](#)2. (C) Calling Deuba's arrest "a matter of very deep regret," Natwar told the Parliament that "for the last three months the situation deteriorated rapidly." However, India's "unique relationship" poses a "difficulty" in formulating policy. While reiterating the GOI's desire to assist in an "amicable and friendly manner," the Foreign Minister bluntly warned that "India had all the leverages; we have not used any of them." While New Delhi press continue to report pressure from the Indian armed forces to resume the arms supply to Nepal, MEA Undersecretary (Nepal) Manu Mahawar told Poloff on April 29 that the King's actions had "set his cause back" within the GOI.

Comment

[1](#)3. (C) The arrest this week of the Nepalese oppositionist has significantly soured GOI attitudes toward the King, dampening optimistic scenarios arising out of the April 22-23 meetings in Jakarta which suggested a democracy-for-military assistance swap as a way out of the current impasse. The King's latest actions will make it more difficult for the GOI to accept future positive steps by the palace as sufficient progress to justify a resumption of arms supplies (something its leftist governing partners already strongly oppose). Press accounts of pressure from the military for a quick resumption of assistance support our earlier reporting (Ref A) of disagreement between the MoD and the MEA on arms supply.
BLAKE